

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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2 Various configurations of discharge valves for humidifier water containers are
3 disclosed herein. Among other things, the present invention provides simple and
4 economical discharge valves that may be constructed in one piece using an elastic material
5 such as silicone rubber. One configuration includes a valve body and stopper with an
6 elastic rib integrally formed with the valve body and the stopper having adequate length to
7 maintain the stopper in a closed position absent external forces. Another configuration
8 uses a flexible barrier is integrally formed with a valve body. The barrier has a slit through
9 its thickness, and is sufficiently resilient to prevent liquid flow through the slit under the
10 weight of water inside the container. In accordance with other aspects of the invention,
11 the valve has a flexible member defining a base and a generally cylindrical sidewall that has
12 at least one opening therethrough. When the base is deformed, such as by a plunger
13 extending from a humidifier cabinet, the sidewall is pulled away from the humidifier bottle
14 collar so as to allow fluid flow through the opening. A further valve configuration
15 includes a flexible member attached to the container or to a cap that attaches to the
16 container. A stopper extends through a water outlet in a sealing relationship and is
17 positioned to be displaced from the outlet when the container is received in a humidifier
18 mechanism.